The *Vita* Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer

NANCY PATTERSON ŠEVČENKO

For Cyril Mango

The author of a *vita* of St. Nicholas, composed sometime in the thirteenth or four-teenth century, tells us how he views the various ways of honoring a saint. If someone celebrates the memory of the saint with all his heart and soul, says this anonymous au-thor, he will not go away disappointed. If someone builds a chapel in the saint's name, he will confound the devil as well as all his enemies, and God will increase his possessions, as He did for Job. If someone writes down the life and miracles of the saint, he will be granted release from sins on the Day of Judgment. And if someone expounds the saint's life and miracles before other men, he will earn his reward in heaven and eternal life.[1] In short, to honor the saint on his feast day is fine; to build something in his name is better; to write down his life is better still—but to declaim it before others is the best of all.

[1] The text is a version of the Βίος ἐν συντόμῳ, ed. G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos: Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche. Texte und Untersuchungen,* 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1913, 1917), 1:298.5–13 (cf. 277.5–12); 2:388–89. Some Byzantine literary figures did in fact achieve sainthood through their hagiographical writings. At the death of Joseph the Hymnographer, for example, all the saints to whom he had composed hymns are said to have spilled out of heaven to greet him and escort him inside; see the *vita* of Joseph by John the Deacon, PG 105:973A–76A, and my article "Canon and Calendar: The Role of a Ninth-Century Hymnogra-pher in Shaping the Celebration of the Saints," in *The Byzantine World in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* ed. L. Brubaker (Aldershot, 1998), 101–14, esp. 103. Symeon Metaphrastes, the 10th-century author and revisor of dozens of saints' *vitae,* was celebrated as a saint within a century of his death, and Michael Psellos wrote an *akolouthia* for him; see E. Kurtz and F. Drexl, eds., *Michaelis Pselli scripta minora* (Milan, 1936), 1:108–19. Neophytos of Cyprus, also an author of saints' *vitae* in the late 12th century, apparently believed he too would be well rewarded, to judge by the fresco he used to adorn the bema next to his rock-cut cell; see C. Mango and E. Hawkins, "The Hermitage of St. Neophytos and Its Wall-Paintings," *DOP* 20 (1966): 121–206, esp. 128–29, 165–66, and fig. 66. See also A. W. Epstein, "Formulas for Salvation: A Comparison of Two Byzantine Monasteries and Their Founders," *ChHist* 50 (1981): 385–400; R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold: Byzan-tine Society and Its Icons* (London, 1985), 215–51, esp. 239–42; and, above all, C. Galatariotou, *The Making of a Saint: The Life, Times and Sanctification of Neophytos the Recluse* (Cambridge, 1991), who describes "how he [Neophytos] proceeded to imbue his own life's story with the same structural characteristics of sanctity which he himself had used to give flesh and blood to his own saints' stories" (p. 73).

The subject of this article is the Byzantine *vita*, or biographical, icon, a genre of hagiography that, in this author's terms at least, would rank highly: not only does it honor the saint, and in a work of art at that, but it also recounts his life—and does so publicly.

There are less than two dozen surviving Byzantine examples of *vita* icons, though the influence exerted by the genre was considerable. Byzantine icons of this type first appear in the early thirteenth century; they fade away somewhat in the fourteenth century, reappear in the fifteenth, and are popular in the post-Byzantine period.[2] The most obvious characteristics of this genre of icon are the following: they are generally rather large panels, ranging from ca. 70 cm to 2 m in height; they are devoted to the *vitae* of quite well established saints; the scenes—generally between twelve and twenty—usually run around all four sides of the image of the saint; and the cycles of any one saint vary remarkably little from icon to icon.[3] These scenes may echo, but do not consistently follow,

[2]The earliest extant icon with a hagiographical cycle is probably an 11th-century icon of St. Nicholas on Mt. Sinai (now in two parts); it was originally a triptych, a form for which there are no later parallels among the surviving narrative icons. Also rare in its form is a very small late-14th-century icon in the Chilandari monastery on Mt. Athos (25 × 29.5 cm), which has scenes from the life of St. Mary of Egypt arranged in four horizontal rows; an unpublished icon on Mt. Sinai (64.4 × 49.8 cm) has comparable rows of scenes from the life of St. George. The latter two icons, which are the only two I know of this type, echo cycles in manuscripts such as Paris gr. 510 of the 9th century or the 11th-century Menologion on Mt. Athos, Esphigmenou 14. For the Sinai triptych, see K. Weitzmann, "Fragments of an Early St. Nicholas Triptych on Mount Sinai," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.Ἑτ., ser. 4, 4 (1964): 1–23, and N. P. Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art* (Turin, 1983), 162–63 and no. 1; for the Chilandari icon, see G. Babić, *Icons* (New York, 1988), pls. 34, 35; for the icon of St. George on Mt. Sinai, see T. Mark-Weiner, "Narrative Cycles of the Life of St. George in Byzantine Art" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1977), no. 80. Other icons with hagiographical narratives in rare forms comprise an epistyle on Mt. Sinai containing some scenes from the life of St. Nicholas, and one in the same monastery illustrating miracles of St. Eustratios and others of the Holy Five; see Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, no. 5, and D. Mouriki, "Icons from the 12th to the 15th Century," in *Sinai: Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine*, ed. K. A. Manafis (Athens, 1990), 106, figs. 20–22 (hereafter *Sinai*).

The oldest *vita* icon of the familiar sort, that is, one having scenes framing a central portrait, may well be the fragmentary St. Marina icon from Philoussa on Cyprus (see note 3 below). Athanasios Papageorghiou dates the icon to the 8th to 9th century (*Icons of Cyprus* [Nicosia, 1992], 8–9, 55), which is surely too early, but a late 12th-century date, which I would prefer, as this would place the icon neatly in the context of the other surviving *vita* icons of its type, may be just too late. The anonymous reader of this article believes that the icon can be no later than the early 11th century. I myself have not seen it, and must leave the question of its date temporarily unresolved.

[3]On the subject of *vita* icons, see Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, 162–65, and eadem, "Vita Icons and 'Decorated' Icons of the Komnenian Period," in *Four Icons in the Menil Collection*, ed. B. Davezac (Houston, Tex., 1992), 56–69; H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence* (Chicago, 1994), 249–60; and the invaluable study by H. Hager, *Die Anfänge des italienischen Altarbildes: Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte des toskanischen Hochaltarretabels* (Munich, 1962), esp. 91–100. On mechanisms for creating a *vita* icon cycle, see the interesting article by M. Vassilakis, "Εἰκόνα τοῦ ἁγίου Χαραλάμπους," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.Ἑτ., ser. 4, 13 (1985–86): 247–60. See also H. Maguire, *The Icons of Their Bodies: Saints and Their Images in Byzantium* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), esp. 169–94 (on St. Nicholas and St. George cycles).

A comprehensive list of surviving examples has never been drawn up. For the purposes of this paper, I will cite as Byzantine the following icons: *vita* icons on Mt. Sinai of Sts. Nicholas, George, Catherine, John the Baptist, Moses, and Panteleimon (Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, nos. 3 and 42; G. Soteriou and M. Soteriou, Εἰκόνες τῆς μονῆς Σινᾶ, vols. 1–2 [Athens, 1956, 1958], 2: pls. 165–70; K. Weitzmann, "Icon Programs of the 12th and 13th Centuries at Sinai," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.Ἑτ., ser. 4, 12 [1986]: 63–116, esp. 94–107; Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 114–16; eadem, "A Moses Cycle on a Sinai Icon of the Early Thirteenth Century," in *Byzantine East, Latin West: Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. D. Mouriki et al. [Princeton, N.J., 1995], 531–46; H. C. Evans and W. D. Wixom, eds., *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261* [New York, 1997], no. 249 [St. Panteleimon icon]); *vita* icons of St. Nicholas on

known written texts, and the order of episodes is erratic and jumpy—they start with a birth scene and end with a death scene, but otherwise there is no attempt to follow a story line through adjoining sequences of panels. Finally, there is an apparent absence of program in the choice of scenes, and no obvious connection to any particular sanctuary or to the saint's relics.[4]

In content, these icon cycles emphasize—as had Passio cycles from the beginning of Christian time—what the saint did with his life, rather than the wonders he performed after his death. For these illustrated *vitae* are not miracle collections, but models for earthly behavior that will lead to a place in the heavenly kingdom. On St. Nicholas icons, for example (Fig. 1), scenes of the saint's birth, education, and consecration join what are mainly stories of his good deeds and prompt response to need. His tomb at Myra is not depicted, and miraculous healings there are never illustrated, despite the fact that the tomb was known to exude a healing oil. Though collections of Nicholas's miracles existed, the only posthumous one commonly represented on these icons is that of the boy Basil rescued by Nicholas from his service as cupbearer to his Arab abductors and returned to his family.[5] Cycles devoted to martyrs such as St. George (Fig. 2) lay stress on the tortures overcome by the saint one by one, and, once more, award little space to the recounting of his miracles and none at all to the promotion of a particular sanctuary.[6]

The apparently unprogrammatic tone of these panels has meant that it has been hard to understand just what brought this genre of icon into existence and what it is all about.[7]

Patmos, in Kastoria, Skopje, and from Kakopetria, Cyprus (Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, nos. 14, 37, 41, 43, 44; N. Zias, "Εἰκόνες τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς κοιμήσεως τοῦ ἁγίου Νικολάου," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.'Ετ., ser. 4, 5 [1969]: 275–98 [Kastoria icons]; Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, no. 263 [Kakopetria icon; see pp. 158, 159–60, and note 48 below]); an icon of the Anargyroi in Kastoria (*Byzantine Murals and Icons, National Gallery, September–December, 1976*, exhibition catologue [Athens, 1976], no. 107; *Affreschi e icone della Grecia X–XVII secolo* [Athens, 1986], no. 28 [unavailable to me]); the relief icon of St. George in the Byzantine Museum in Athens (K. Weitzmann, *The Icon* [New York, 1978], pl. 35; N. P. Ševčenko, "The Representation of Donors and Holy Figures on Four Byzantine Icons," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.'Ετ., ser. 4, 17 [1993–94]: 157–64, esp. 158–60; *Conversation with God: Icons from the Byzantine Museum of Athens (9th–15th centuries)*, exhibition catalogue, The Hellenic Centre, London [Athens, 1998], no. 4); icons of St. Marina on Cyprus (one from Pedhoulas now in Nicosia, one from Philoussa now in Paphos, a third in the catholikon of the monastery of St. John Lampadistes at Kalopanagiotes; Papageorghiou, *Icons of Cyprus*, 8–9, 55, figs. 2, 34; idem, *Byzantine Icons from Cyprus* [Athens, 1976], nos. 11, 35; S. Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus, 7th–20th Century* [Nicosia, 1995], no. 1 [for the Philoussa icon, see note 2 above]); an icon of St. Basil in Houston (L. Brubaker, "The Vita Icon of Saint Basil: Iconography"; A. W. Carr, "The Vita Icon of Saint Basil: Notes on a Byzantine Object," both in *Four Icons*, ed. Davezac, 70–93, 94–105); and an icon of St. John Lampadistes in the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia (D. Mouriki, "The Cult of Cypriot Saints in Medieval Cyprus as Attested by Church Decorations and Icon Painting," in *"The Sweet Land of Cyprus": Papers Given at the Twenty-fifth Jubilee Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1991*, ed. A. A. M. Bryer and G. S. Georghallides [Nicosia, 1993], 237–77, esp. 249, fig. 17). Icons with framing scenes from the life of Christ or the Virgin have not been included. They first appear somewhat later than the hagiographical ones, and most likely derive their form from them.

[4] Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, 162–65. An exception to the final statement is the iconostasis beam on Mt. Sinai (see above, note 2), which illustrates various miracles performed by the relics of the Holy Five. No written miracle collection describing the events depicted on this beam has survived.

[5] On the iconography of this episode, see Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, 143–48.

[6] Mark-Weiner, "Life of St. George," esp. 302–9. On this Sinai icon of St. George, see Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, pl. 167; Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," 98–99; and recently E. C. Constantinides, "Une icone histor-iée de saint Georges du XIIIe siècle au monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Mont Sinai," in *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo: Rus', Vizantija, Balkany* (St. Petersburg, 1997), 77–104.

[7] On possible origins of the form of the *vita* icon, see Ševčenko, "Vita Icons."

Almost none of the icons is accompanied by a revealing dedicatory inscription, and none has been found in what we would consider its original position, so our knowledge of their liturgical function, if any, is vague at best. The independence of these icon cycles from known literary texts has been frustrating to iconographers, and has led Kurt Weitzmann to assume the existence of manuscript originals with lengthy cycles of illustrations that served as the basis for the painted cycles.[8] Unfortunately, no example of such a manuscript survives, and a close look at the manuscript traditions of the various *vitae* reveals that, in fact, they were never illustrated with cycles of any length and a saint's *vita* in a Byzantine manuscript was rarely adorned with anything more than a standing portrait or a single scene of martyrdom.[9] Fresco cycles are no more likely to have been an immediate source of the icon cycles than were manuscripts, for few ever include as many scenes as we find on the icons.

Whatever its origin, the form spread quickly: already in the thirteenth century one finds variants in South and North Italy, Cyprus, Sinai, and Russia. If one compares an icon of St. Nicholas in Bari (Fig. 3) with the earlier thirteenth-century icon of St. Nicholas from Mt. Sinai (Fig. 1), one sees the obvious similarities.[10] (The fact that Nicholas is a standing figure, not a bust, on the Italian panel is not relevant, since there are plenty of Eastern examples of standing saints.) The Western panel is quite a bit larger, but the scenes, sixteen in each case, run around all four sides of the central portrait on both. On the Apulian work, Nicholas is still clad as an Eastern bishop, and not, as one might have expected, as a Western one with crozier and mitre—this despite the fact that the captions to the scenes are in Latin and the panel was destined for a Latin church. Other than the fact that the icon is painted in a local style, that the captions are in Latin and that there are some oddities in the iconography, the only obvious Western feature here is the addition of a couple of scenes that, though known from the written legend in the East as well as in the West, are not illustrated in Byzantium: the scene of the welcoming of Nicholas as bishop (the top scene in the left row) and two episodes of the story of the exploding vial designed to blow up the saint's church in Myra but defused by Nicholas on the open sea (left and right rows, further down).[11] There are some slightly more subtle program-

[8] Weitzmann, "The Selection of Texts for Cyclic Illustration in Byzantine Manuscripts," in *Byzantine Books and Bookmen,* Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium (Washington, D.C., 1975), 69–109, esp. 84–86; idem, "Icon Programs," 98.

[9] N. P. Ševčenko, *Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion* (Chicago, 1990), esp. 181–96; eadem, *Life of Saint Nicholas,* 165–71.

[10] On the Sinai icon, see Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, pl. 165; Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas,* no. 3. On the Bari icon, see Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium,* no. 320, with bibliography. See also G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence, 1965), figs. 935 ff; P. Belli D'Elia, *Icone di Puglia e Basilicata dal Medioevo al Settecento* (Bari, 1988), no. 25; V. Pace, "Presenze e influenza cipriote nella pitture duecentesca italiana," *CorsiRav* 32 (1985): 259–98, esp. 271 n. 17; idem, "Icone di Puglia, della Terra Santa e di Cipro: Appunti preliminari per un'indagine sulla ricenzione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale duecentesca," in *Il medio oriente e l'occidente nell'arte del XIII secolo,* ed. H. Belting (Bologna, 1979), pt. 2, 181–91, esp. 182, fig. 163. The Bari panel, which was apparently painted for the church of Santa Margherita at Bisceglie, measures 128 × 83.5 cm; the Sinai icon measures 82 × 57 cm. On the question of whether the panel was displayed on the altar of the Bisceglie church, see Hager, *Anfänge,* 98.

[11] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos,* 79, 83, 110. On the Western St. Nicholas tradition, see K. Meisen, *Nikolauskult und Nikolausbrauch im Abendlande* (Düsseldorf, 1931; repr. 1981), with introduction and expanded bibliography, esp. 269–75. Oddities in the iconography of the Bari panel include the three maidens whom Nicholas rescued from prostitution standing behind a high wall, separated from their sleeping father, and the barred
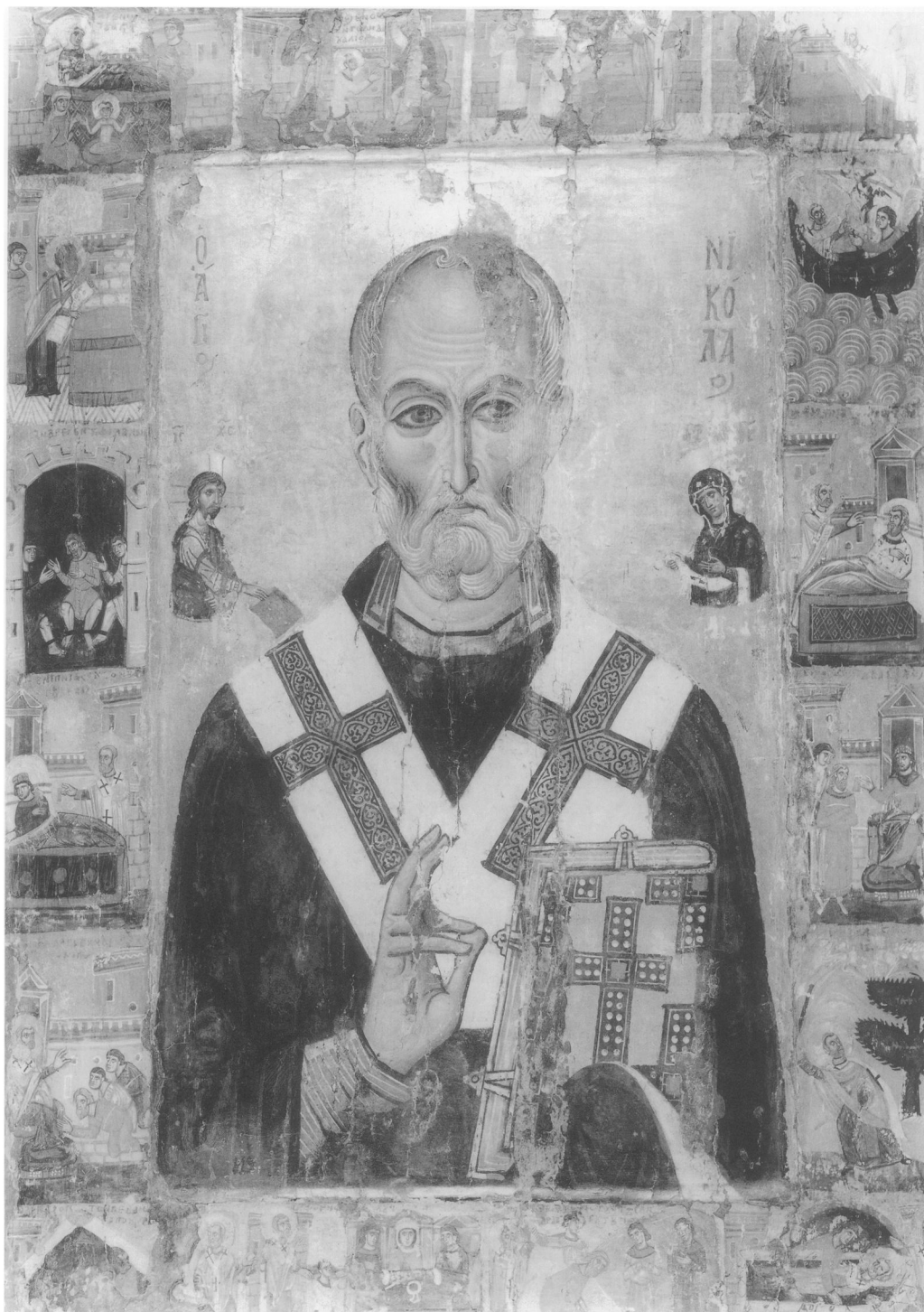
1   St. Nicholas *vita* icon, monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai (photo: courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

2   St. George *vita* icon, monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai (photo: courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
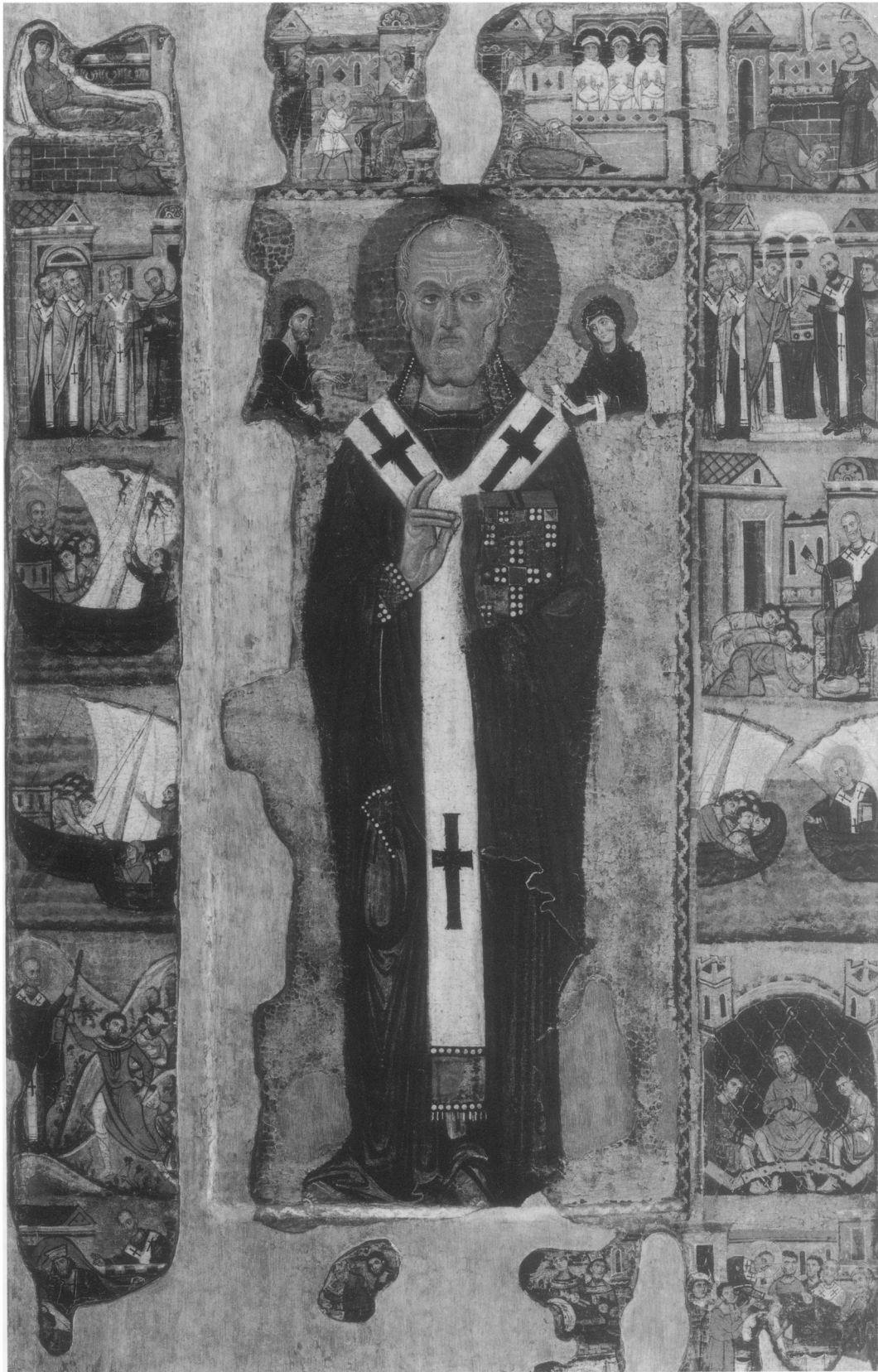
3   St. Nicholas panel, Pinacoteca Provinciale, Bari (photo: Pinacoteca Provinciale, Bari)

4   St. Nicholas panel, church of San Verano, Peccioli (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)

5 St. Catherine panel, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa (photo: Alinari/Art Resource, New York)

6 St. Catherine *vita* icon, monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai (photo: courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

7 St. Francis panel by Bonaventura
Berlinghieri, church of San Francesco,
Pescia (photo: Alinari/Art Resource,
New York)

8 St. Francis panel, Cappella Bardi, church of
Santa Croce, Florence (photo: Alinari/Art
Resource, New York)

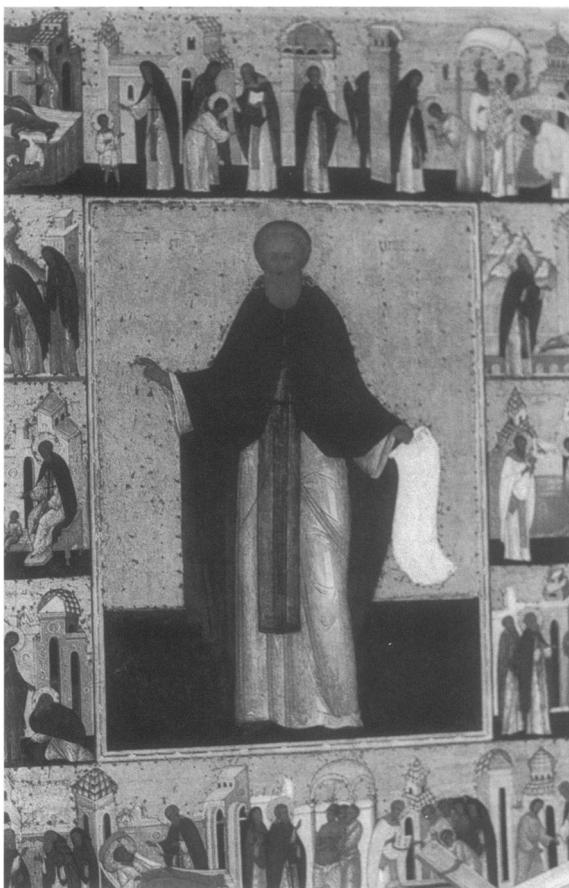9 Elijah *vita* icon, Tretiakov Gallery, Moscow (photo: courtesy of Lev Lifshits)

10 St. Nicholas *vita* icon, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg (photo: courtesy of Engelina Smirnova)

11 Sts. Boris and Gleb *vita* icon, Tretiakov
Gallery, Moscow (photo: courtesy of
Engelina Smirnova)

12 St. Sergej of Radonež *vita* icon, Rublev
Museum, Moscow (after V. Lazarev,
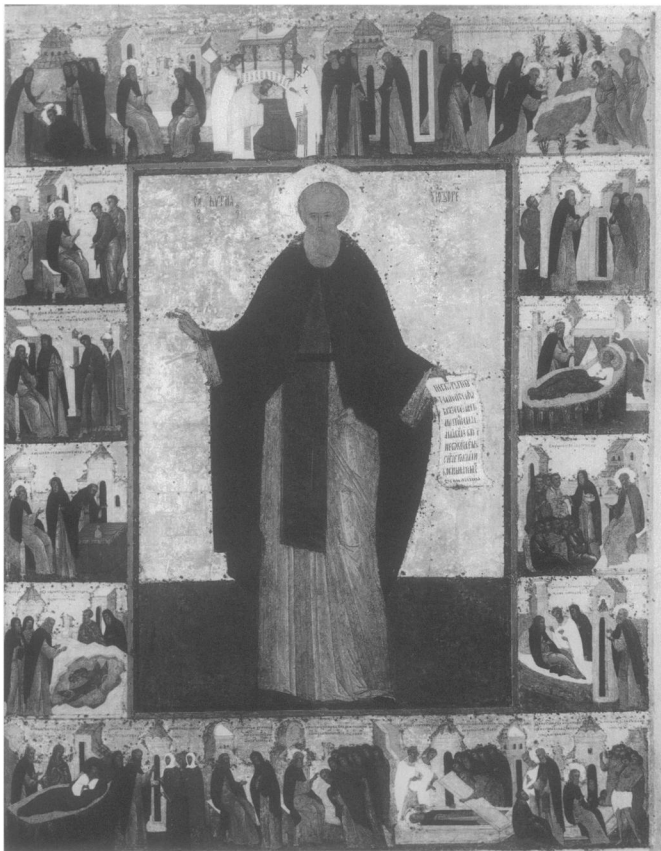*Moscow School of Icon Painting* [Moscow,
1971], pl. 86)

13 St. Kiril Belozerskij *vita* icon, Russian
Museum, St. Petersburg (photo:
courtesy of Engelina Smirnova)

14 Metropolitan Alexis *vita* icon, Tretiakov
Gallery, Moscow (after E. Smirnova,
Moscow Icons, 14th–17th Centuries
[Leningrad, 1989], fig. 152)

15 Metropolitan Peter *vita* icon, Kremlin
    Museums, Moscow (after Smirnova,
    Moscow Icons, fig. 151)

16 King Stefan Dečanski *vita* icon,
    monastery of Dečani (after V. Djurić,
    Ikona svetog kralja Stefana Dečanskog
    [Belgrade, 1985], fig. 1)

17 St. Marina *vita* icon from Pedoulas,
Museum of the Archbishop
Makarios III Cultural Foundation,
Nicosia (photo: D. Mouriki)

18 St. John the Baptist *vita* icon, monastery
of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai (photo:
courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-
Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)

19 Moses *vita* icon, monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai (photo: courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to Mount Sinai)
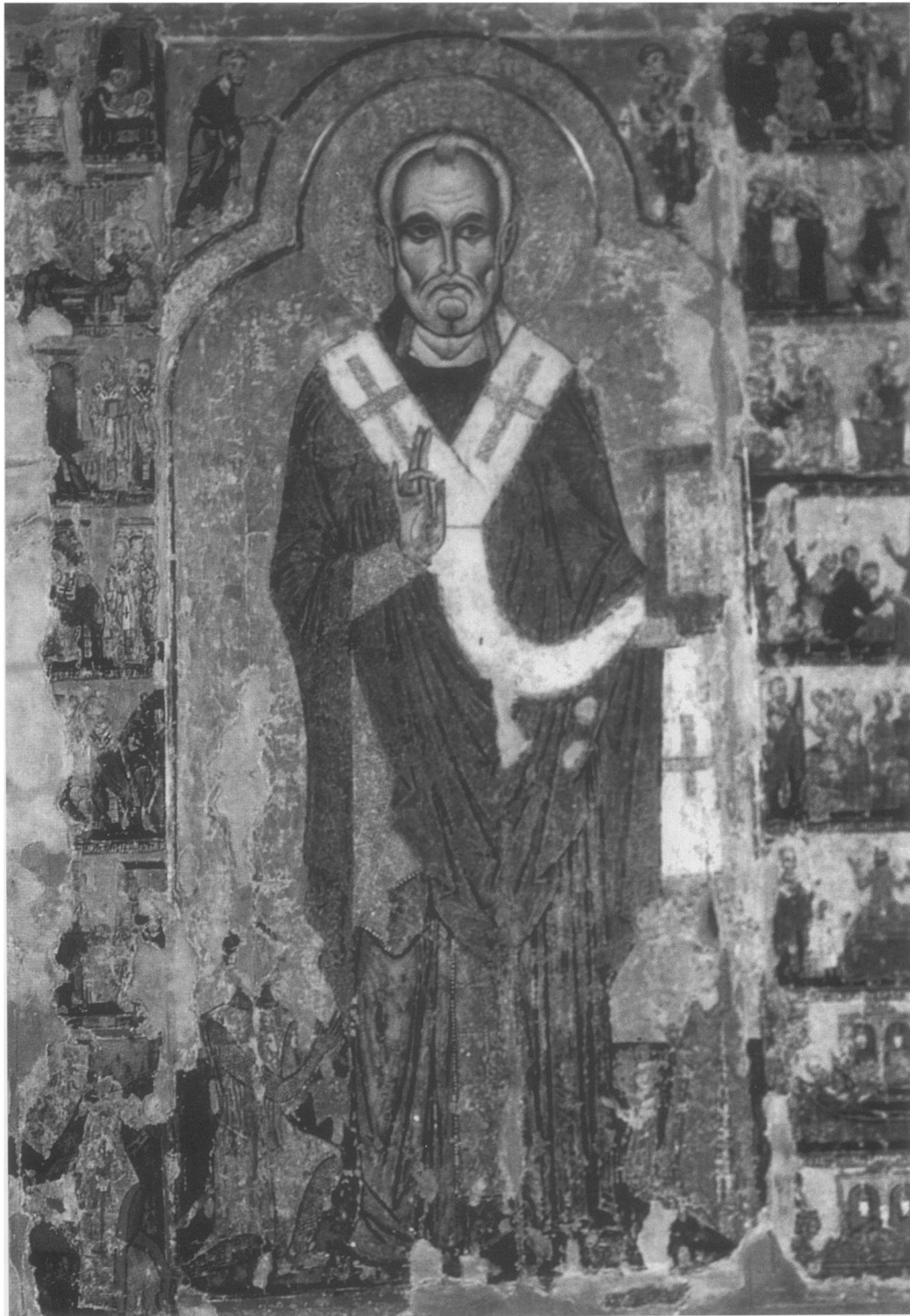
20   St. Nicholas *vita* icon from the church of St. Nicholas tes Steges, Kakopetria, Museum of the
      Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Foundation, Nicosia (after A. Papageorghiou, *Icons of Cyprus*
      [Nicosia, 1992], fig. 32a)

21 St. George *vita* icon from Kastoria, Byzantine Museum, Athens (photo: courtesy of the museum)

22 Wooden icon or xoanon of St. George, Omorphecclesia church, near Kastoria (photo: S. Gerstel)

23   Icon of Moses receiving the Law, monastery of St. Catherine, Mt. Sinai
(photo: courtesy of the Michigan-Princeton-Alexandria Expedition to
Mount Sinai)
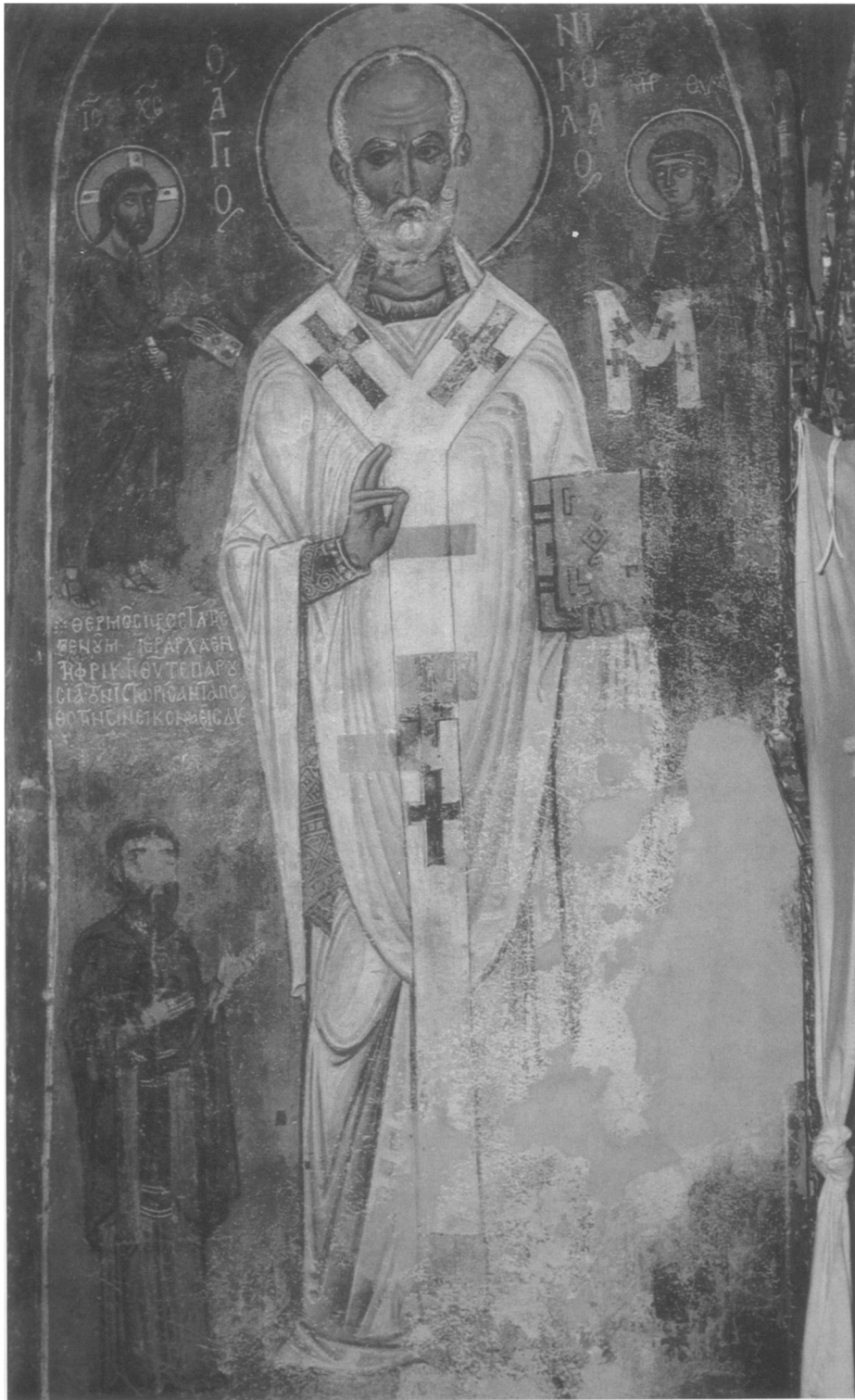
24 St. Nicholas fresco icon, church of St. Nicholas tes Steges, Kakopetria (after A. Stylianou and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus* [London, 1985], fig. 25)

25 Detail, St. Nicholas revives the three salted boys, St. Nicholas *vita* icon from Kakopetria, Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Foundation, Nicosia (photo: I. Ševčenko)

26 Detail, Tomb of St. Nicholas, St. Nicholas *vita* icon from Kakopetria, Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Cultural Foundation, Nicosia (photo: I. Ševčenko)

27　Detail, Death of St. Nicholas at Myra, St. Nicholas *vita* icon from Kakopetria, Museum of the Archbishop
　　Makarios III Cultural Foundation, Nicosia (photo: I. Ševčenko)

matic elements here: the painter has emphasized the episcopal content by transforming Nicholas's tutor, usually a monk, into a bishop, and by placing scenes relating to his ordination high on the sides, across from each other; he has also delighted in painting the billowing sails in the various sea scenes, so that the marine aspects of Nicholas's career certainly gain greater prominence. But otherwise this artist, whatever his background, has retold the traditional story of Nicholas from birth to death, seamlessly introducing an event rarely told in the East but popular in the West, and in so doing has woven the Eastern and Western aspects of the saint into a single figure acceptable to the mixed world for which this panel was created.

A Pisan panel of the third quarter of the thirteenth century devoted to St. Nicholas, the one in Peccioli (Fig. 4), presents a different treatment of the basic cycle.[12] Here the number of scenes has been drastically reduced, and these are limited to a position on the sides of the saint; the saint elbows his way into their midst in a thoroughly un-Byzantine fashion. The choice of scenes at first glance looks ordinary enough: there are the birth of the saint, two episodes of the Basil story, and the story of the three maidens saved by Nicholas from prostitution by his nighttime gift to their father, here told in barest outline. The selection does not appear so random, however, if read in connection with the portrait of the donor, a tiny figure, ostensibly female, who kneels near the saint. For, indeed, what has been chosen, to the exclusion of the usual consecration themes and marine or rescue scenes, is a sequence of family scenes, each involving in some way the birth and protection of children: the birth and miraculous first hours of the saint, his rescue of the child Basil, or his charity toward the three destitute young maidens. The donor has thus wrenched a personal sequence out of the general narrative that characterizes a proper Byzantine *vita* cycle; we find ourselves reading St. Nicholas's stories as though they were the story of this donor herself, and we learn more about her, in fact, than we do about St. Nicholas. Each scene on this panel is a sort of personal thanksgiving for a miracle experienced or awaited by the kneeling figure of the donor.

Such a concern for refashioning a *vita* cycle of the Byzantine type for a specific purpose can be seen if one compares, as has often been done, a mid-thirteenth-century Pisan panel of St. Catherine of Alexandria (Fig. 5) with a somewhat earlier Sinai panel of the same saint (Fig. 6).[13] As Klaus Krüger has noted, the Pisan panel, destined for display in a Dominican institution, stresses through its choice of scenes the learning and rhetorical

prison housing the three generals. The vial episode, known as the Thauma de Artemide, is rarely represented in Byzantine art; see Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, 96, 102–3.

[12] G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), figs. 847, 848, 850, 863, 864; Hager, *Anfänge*, 95, pl. 135; K. Weitzmann, "Crusader Icon and Maniera Greca," in *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*, ed. I. Hutter (Vienna, 1984), 156, fig. 17. The panel is thought to have been made for the church of San Verano in Peccioli, where it is currently housed. In the 19th century it belonged to a private collection. It measures 123 × 101 cm.

[13] J. H. Stubblebine, "Byzantine Influence in Thirteenth-Century Italian Panel Painting," *DOP* 20 (1966): 87–101, esp. 91–92, figs. 9, 10; K. Krüger, *Die frühe Bildkult des Franziskus in Italien: Gestalt- und Funktionswandel des Tafelbildes im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1992), esp. 65–67, figs. 117, 222; Belting, *Likeness*, 377, 380, figs. 226, 227; Weitzmann, "Maniera Greca," 154–55. See also E. Carli, *Pittura medievale pisana* (Milan, 1958), 52, figs. 77–81, and color pl. v; Kaftal, *Tuscan Painting*, fig. 249; Hager, *Anfänge*, 95, pl. 134. The Pisan panel, which was probably made for the Dominican church of Santa Caterina in Pisa, measures 107 × 113 cm; the Sinai icon measures 75.3 × 51.4 cm. For the Sinai panel, see Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 173, fig. 46, and 386 nn. 70, 71; Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, pl. 166; Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," 95, fig. 25.

skills of the princess, which are values consonant with the aims of the Dominican order.[14]
The Byzantine icon, by contrast, emphasizes her inexorable path toward martyrdom: her
refusal to sacrifice, her tortures, and execution. The Pisan panel ends with the angels
carrying the remains of the saint to Mt. Sinai; the Byzantine panel, though very likely
painted on Sinai itself, does not include this particular reference at all and concludes
instead with the scene of her death.

The Tuscan panels devoted to the life of St. Francis show another variant on the
traditional Byzantine *vita* icon. The earliest surviving dated panel is the one in Pescia,
painted by Bonaventura Berlinghieri in 1235 (Fig. 7);[15] the date means not only that
these St. Francis panels are older than any of the Italian panels mentioned so far, but
also that they were being produced very soon indeed after the saint's death in 1226. The
early St. Francis panels concentrate on miracles, especially miracles at the tomb of the
saint, a theme foreign to the Byzantine *vita* icon tradition. However, around the year
1250 the content of St. Francis cycles changes and a new genre of cycle is introduced,
one that stresses the biography of Francis, his ethical behavior, his assimilation to Christ,
and the triumph of his now solidly institutionalized order (Fig. 8).[16]

What marks these St. Francis panels, and distinguishes them from Byzantine ones, is
that the form here is being used to celebrate and develop the cult of very new saints,
such as Francis, his disciple Clare, or Margherita of Cortona—saints who breathed their
last only yesterday and whose *vitae* were at that very time being hurriedly composed and
as hurriedly rewritten.[17] The panels served as a means of making the new saint known
to the public, revealing first the miraculous powers of the saint and eventually the virtues

---

[14] Krüger, *Bildkult*, 66–67. It should be noted, however, that the imbalance may be due to the number of
scenes included in each cycle. The Sinai panel does include scenes of Catherine's declaration of faith and
her dispute with the philosophers, which are on the Pisan panel, but, since it makes room for a larger
number of episodes, it appears to dwell less on these than on her tortures and martyrdom.

[15] Krüger, *Bildkult*, no. 2, figs. 1–7, 9; Hager, *Anfänge*, 94, pl. 130. The Pescia panel measures 160 × 123
cm. The oldest known St. Francis panel, once in San Miniato al Tedesco, is known only through a 17th-
century engraving. The panel was reportedly dated 1228, the year in which the saint was canonized; see
Krüger, *Bildkult*, no. 1, fig. 8; Hager, *Anfänge*, 94, fig. 128.

[16] Krüger, *Bildkult*, esp. 101–41. See also D. Blume, *Wandmalerei als Ordenspropaganda: Bildprogramme im
Chorbereich franziskaner Konvente Italiens bis zur Mitte des 14. Jahrhunderts* (Worms, 1983), esp. 13–17; H. Van Os,
"St. Francis as a Second Christ," and idem, "The Earliest Altarpieces of St. Francis," both in his *Studies in
Early Tuscan Painting* (London, 1992), 203–32, 267–76; B. Bughetti, "Vita e miracoli di S. Francesco nelle
tavole istoriate dei secoli XIII e XIV," *AFrH* 19 (1926): 636–732; P. Scarpellini, "Iconografia francescana nei
secoli XIII e XIV," in *Francesco d'Assisi: Storia e arte* (Milan, 1982), esp. 91–99; C. Frugoni, *Francesco e l'invenzione
delle stimmate* (Turin, 1993), esp. 321–98. Another book by C. Frugoni, *Francesco: Un' altra storia* (Genoa, 1988),
was unavailable to me.

[17] On St. Francis legends, see S. Da Campagnola, *Francesco d'Assisi nei suoi scritti e nelle sue biografie dei secoli
XIII–XIV* (Assisi, 1981); J. Moorman, *The Sources of the Life of St. Francis of Assisi* (London, 1966). On St. Clare,
see J. Wood, "Thirteenth-Century Italian Painting: Clare of Assisi," *Art History* 14 (1991): 301–28. On Mar-
gherita of Cortona, see J. Cannon, "Marguerite et les Cortonais: Iconographie d'un 'culte civique' au XIVe
siècle," in *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne* (Rome, 1995), 403–13; J. Cannon and A. Vauchez,
Margherita of Cortona and the Lorenzetti: Sienese Art and the Cult of a Holy Woman in Medieval Tuscany (University
Park, Pa., 1999). As Joanna Cannon has pointed out, the Cortona panel with scenes devoted to the life of
Margherita of Cortona actually preceded the completion of her written *vita*. Illustrated *vitae* of St. Dominic
are, interestingly enough, all but non-existent in this period; see Krüger, *Bildkult*, 141–47, and J. Cannon,
"Dominic *alter Christus*? Representations of the Founder in and after the *Arca di San Domenico*," in *Christ among
the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. K. Emery Jr. and J. Wawrykow (Notre Dame, Ind., 1998), 26–48.

of the order to which he or she belonged, setting out for all to see the proper reading and interpretation of the events depicted. In a period in which differing written versions of these events began to proliferate, the work of art apparently offered the "truth," showing what the saint actually looked like and establishing what had really happened. The scenes thus became the authoritative version of the life, rivaling the written *vita* as an authenticating document.[18]

The Western variants on the *vita* icon form, then, show the *vita* narrative being used in a variety of ways, namely, to integrate the veneration of a saint common to two cultures, to promulgate an institution's values or voice a particular personal appeal, and to establish the virtues of an entirely new holy figure.

A similar variety of uses of the *vita* icon form can be found in the Slavic world. A magnificent thirteenth-century icon of Elijah done in Pskov, west of Novgorod (now in the Tretiakov Gallery in Moscow), is the earliest of the Slavic *vita* icons (Fig. 9).[19] By the fourteenth century there are numerous Slavic *vita* icons of St. Nicholas (Fig. 10), as well as of a few other familiar saints such as the archangel Michael and St. George.[20] As in Italy, but in contrast to Byzantium, relatively new heroes were also honored with the production of *vita* icons. As early as the fourteenth century, icons were being produced that outlined the story of the princes Boris and Gleb, sons of the tsar Vladimir the Great, who had been reportedly murdered by order of their brother Svjatopolk in 1015.[21] On an icon from the church of Sts. Boris and Gleb in Kolomna, now in the Tretiakov Gallery (Fig. 11), one finds few conventional hagiographic *topoi* other than death and burial, and many of the scenes one has to consider essentially "historical," representing events in the history of a people, such as Boris returning from the war against the Petchenegs or the combat of Jaroslav the Wise with the evil Svjatopolk.[22] Such an attempt to present the viewer with a common, nationalist, heritage is not something one finds in the Byzantine icons.

The *vita* icon as historical chronicle reached its apogee in the early sixteenth century, when splendid icons of this type were created to celebrate the great founders of Russian monasticism who had lived two centuries earlier—figures such as Sergej of Radonež, Kiril Belozerskij, and others (Figs. 12, 13). The long icon cycles devoted to their lives became visual chronicles of the founding, the difficulties surmounted, the miracles attached, and the ultimate triumph of a single monastic institution through the efforts

[18] On the painted *vita* as an authenticating document, see Blume, *Wandmalerei*, 17, 20–21.

[19] M. Alpatov and I. Rodnikova, *Pskovskaja ikona XIII–XVI vekov* (Leningrad, 1990), no. 1, pl. 1. The icon measures 141 × 111 cm.

[20] For St. Nicholas icons, see A. Boguslawski, "The Vitae of St. Nicholas and His Hagiographical Icons in Russia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1982); E. Smirnova, *Zhivopis' Velikogo Novgoroda* (Moscow, 1976), nos. 9, 13, 35; Alpatov and Rodnikova, *Pskovskaja ikona*, no. 7; V. Lazarev, *Moscow School of Icon Painting* (Moscow, 1971), pls. 9–11; V. Antonova and N. Mneva, *Katalog drevnerusskoj zhivopisi* (Moscow, 1963), 1: nos. 13, 164, 175, 302, etc.; *Vizantija, Balkany, Rus'*, exhibition catalogue (Moscow, 1991), no. 105. For the archangel Michael icons, see E. Smirnova, *Icônes de l'école de Moscou* (Moscow, 1989), pls. 42–45, 68–76. For the St. George icon, see V. Lazarev, *Novgorodian Icon Painting* (Moscow, 1969), 15, pls. 17, 18.

[21] L. Müller, *Die altrussischen hagiographischen Erzählungen und liturgische Dichtungen über die heiligen Boris und Gleb* (Munich, 1967); G. Lenhoff, *The Martyred Princes Boris and Gleb: A Socio-Cultural Study of the Cult and the Texts* (Columbus, Ohio, 1989).

[22] Smirnova, *L'école de Moscou*, pls. 46–52; Lazarev, *Moscow School*, pls. 3–8.

of its holy founder.[23] And it was not just monastic institutions that were celebrated: the genre included ecclesiastical cycles as well, prime examples being the *vitae* of the metropolitans of Moscow Peter and Alexis, founders of the Muscovite church, which Peter had moved from Kiev to Moscow in 1326 (Figs. 14, 15).[24] Like the monastic icons for their institutions, the large *vitae* panels devoted to famous churchmen acted as chronicles of the creation and later history of the church of Moscow. They included scenes of such historically certifiable events as the building of the Dormition Cathedral in Moscow and the visit of Peter to Patriarch Athanasios I in Constantinople.

An extreme step in this direction can be seen in the production in 1577 of a huge icon for the church of Dečani in Serbia (Fig. 16).[25] The icon is again devoted to the life of a founder of a monastery—a founder who in this case happened to be the king of Serbia, Stefan Uroš III. Stefan Dečanski, as he is known, had died over two hundred years earlier, in 1331; he was buried in his foundation at Dečani, and his relics had become the object of a cult. In this work themes related to the development of the saint's cult at his tomb and to the chronicle of a royal ruler are inextricably woven together. Although the form used is Byzantine, the message it serves to convey is unparalleled in Byzantium, where Constantine the Great had been the only ruler to become an important saint,[26] and where the scenes on *vita* icons, as we shall see, never celebrated a specific place of cult.

By contrast with the panels from other cultures, which apparently initially borrowed the *vita* icon form from Byzantium, the Byzantine panels come across as almost bland, being biographical and ethical in content, comprehensive in their choice of scenes, and utterly unspecific with regard to topographical references. The use of the form for personal, historical, or political purposes was a potential apparently never exploited in Byzantium. What, then, was their purpose?

At this point I turn to the earliest Byzantine panels we have, in order to look more closely at their date and provenance, their size, their choice of saints, and the character of their donors, as well as the particular form chosen for the recounting of the *vitae*. There is little internal evidence to be gleaned, but what there is should be investigated carefully for any insights into the origin and purpose of this most influential genre.

Date and provenance: Most of the surviving Byzantine *vita* icons date from the thirteenth century.[27] Of these thirteenth-century examples, six come from Mt. Sinai, one from Cyprus, and two from Kastoria. Similarities in the reverses of the Sinai panels sug-

[23] For St. Sergej, see Lazarev, *Moscow School*, pls. 86, 87. For St. Kiril, see Smirnova, *L'école de Moscou*, pls. 155–57; Πύλες τοῦ Μυστηρίου, exhibition catalogue (Athens, 1994), no. 20. See also the icon of St. Dimitri Priloutski, ibid., pl. 148.

[24] For Peter, see Smirnova, *L'école de Moscou*, pl. 151; for Alexis, see ibid., pl. 152.

[25] V. Djurić, *Ikona svetog kralja Stefana Dečanskog* (Belgrade, 1985); French trans., *BalkSt* 24 (1983): 377–401.

[26] We should not, however, ignore the empresses Irene and Theodora, even though their *vitae* were never illustrated.

[27] Icons on Mt. Sinai of Sts. Catherine, George, Nicholas, John the Baptist, Panteleimon, and Moses; icon in Nicosia of St. Nicholas (originally from Kakopetria); icons in Kastoria of St. Nicholas and of the Anargyroi. On these icons, see note 3 above.

gest that all of the early *vita* icons on Sinai known today may in fact have been made at the monastery itself.[28]

Size: Most of the panels are quite large, that is, a meter or so in height.[29] The large size of the early panels leads one to conclude that these icons had some sort of public position and perhaps function: despite the presence of donor portraits on some of the icons, they were not intended for private contemplation. Although in post-Byzantine times they are sometimes put in the iconostasis, this does not seem to have been the case in earlier times; Weitzmann in his study of the early Sinai *vita* icons proposes that they were simply hung on the wall of an appropriate chapel.[30]

Choice of saints: If one compares the choice of saints on the early *vita* icons with saints chosen for contemporary narrative fresco cycles, one sees that the choice of the *vita* icons is not particularly representative of hagiographic illustration as a whole, but seems to reflect a connection with Mt. Sinai itself.[31] Weitzmann pointed out that the extant *vita* icons on Sinai could all be connected with chapels located either in the basilica and within the monastery walls, or near the monastery and under its supervision.[32] Those icons found outside the monastery also primarily celebrate saints who were highly venerated at Sinai; one thinks especially of Marina (Fig. 17) and Elijah. Although there is no *vita* icon of Marina on Sinai, there are dozens of plain icons of Marina there, and one of the three chapels attached to the north aisle of the basilica at Sinai was dedicated to her.[33] The panel of Elijah in Moscow (Fig. 9) has no exact Sinai counterpart, but the site of Elijah's succor by the raven was, of course, one of the three holiest spots around the monastery.[34] Furthermore, across the top of the Pskov icon there is a seven-figure

[28]The design on the reverse of the icons of Sts. Catherine, Nicholas, and John the Baptist is described by Doula Mouriki as "superimposed bands of alternating red and blue-black wavy brushstrokes" (in *Sinai*, 386). The icon of St. Panteleimon has nested lozenge-shaped designs in red and blue-black (see Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, 379). The designs on the reverse of the icons of George and Moses are unknown to me.

[29]Of the 13th-century panels, the St. Basil panel, housed in Houston, is the smallest, at 66 cm; the Kakopetria icon, by far the largest, at 203 × 158 cm. Mouriki in her catalogue of donors portrayed on Sinai icons has included, and dated to the second half of the 13th century, a pair of *vita* icons of Sts. George and Nicholas, usually considered to be 15th-century; D. Mouriki, "Portraits de donateurs et invocations sur les icônes du XIIIe siècle au Sinaï," in *Modes de vie et modes de pensée à Byzance*, Etudes balkaniques, Cahiers Pierre Belon 2 (Paris, 1995), nos. 10, 11 (see also Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, nos. 169, 170). These icons are smaller still: each measures 44 × 34 cm.

[30]Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," 94–107, 113.

[31]T. Gouma-Peterson, "Narrative Cycles of Saints' Lives in Byzantine Churches from the Tenth to the Mid-Fourteenth Century," *GOTR* 30 (1985): 31–44. She has counted 36 cycles of St. George, 31 of Nicholas, 6 of Forty Martyrs, 4 of Demetrios (and 2 for Peter and Paul, and 2 for Stephen), 2 of Basil, 2 of Kosmas and Damianos, 2 of Sabbas, and 1 of Panteleimon (and a single cycle for several other saints). See also the chapter "A Survey of Hagiographical Cycles through the End of the 12th Century," in N. P. Ševčenko, "Cycles of the Life of St. Nicholas in Byzantine Art" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1973), 13–72.

[32]Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," 94–107, 113.

[33]K. Weitzmann, *The Icon* (New York, 1982), 206; J. Folda, "The Saint Marina Icon," in *Four Icons*, ed. Davezac (as in note 3 above), 107–33, esp. 117.

[34]There was a chapel of Elijah on Mt. Horeb, much visited by pilgrims. The pilgrim Antonius of Cremona, who visited it in 1331, reported that one hundred ravens were fed every day at the monastery in memory of Elijah; Antonius de Cremona, *Itinerarium ad Sepulcrum Domini (1327, 1330)*, ed. R. Röhricht, *ZDPV* 13 (1890): 167; cf. L. Eckenstein, *A History of Sinai* (London–New York, 1921), 158. The typikon composed by the abbot Symeon of Sinai in 1214 (see below, p. 163) celebrates above all Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Elisha, and Catherine; A. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie liturgicheskikh rukopisej* (Kiev, 1917), 3:394–419.

Deesis, apparently one of the earliest anywhere in Russia, which bears a remarkable re-semblance to the ones reconstructed for Sinai by Weitzmann and most recently by Mary Aspra.[35] Although the connections of *vita* icons found on Cyprus and elsewhere with the Sinai saints may be coincidence, the coincidence is worth watching.

Character of the donors: Not very many portraits of donors are to be found among these thirteenth-century *vita* icons, but all the Sinai figures, at least, seem to be foreign-ers.[36] The St. George icon on Sinai was given by John the Iberian, that is, John the Geor-gian, who was both monk and priest (Fig. 2);[37] the donor of the St. John the Baptist icon wears the same white robes and has the tonsure of a Georgian cleric (Fig. 18).[38] Even the abbot of Sinai who donated the huge Moses icon has the name of Neilos ho Kooueri, which is probably Quirini, a Venetian name known on Crete from shortly after the Vene-tian takeover (Fig. 19).[39] And the Kakopetria icon, an example from the later thirteenth century, shows a Latin knight and his lady kneeling by the feet of St. Nicholas (Fig. 20).[40]

Finally, the form chosen to display the *vitae:* The form—*vita* scenes as a framing ele-ment around a central portrait—associates them with the decorated *periphereia*, the pre-cious frames of gold and silver that were being added to icons during the Komnenian period.[41] In works such as these, the central panel is envisaged as a separate unit from

[35] Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," 86–94; M. Aspra-Vardavakis, "Three Thirteenth-Century Sinai Icons of John the Baptist Derived from a Cypriot Model," in *Medieval Cyprus: Studies in Art, Architecture, and History in Memory of Doula Mouriki*, ed. N. P. Ševčenko and C. Moss (Princeton, N.J., 1999), 179–93.

[36] For a listing of the donors, see Mouriki, "Portraits de donateurs," 103–35, nos. 3, 4, 7, 10, 11.

[37] For the inscription, see Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, 2:150; Mouriki, "Portraits de donateurs," no. 7.

[38] Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 115–16. See R. Janin, "Les Géorgiens à Jérusalem," *EO* 16 (1913): 211, quoting Jacques de Vitry; see also G. Peradze, "An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine as Revealed in the Writings of Non-Georgian Pilgrims," *Georgica* 1.4–5 (1937): 181–246. The pilgrim Magister Thietmar dressed as a Georgian monk and grew a long beard to be able to travel more safely through the Holy Land to Sinai; Thietmar, *Peregrinatio*, VIII, ed. J. C. M. Laurent, *Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1873), 20: "Accon igitur iter arripiens, habitu tamquam Georgianus monachus et longa barba simulavi quod non eram." See Eckenstein, *Sinai*, 150–51. Later Magister Thietmar describes Georgians in Jerusalem as having "coronas," laymen and clergy alike—the laymen's being square, the clergy's round—and tall hats ("ferentes in capitibus pillea unius ulne longa") (ibid., XXVIII, ed. Laurent, *Peregrinatores*, 51).

[39] Mouriki ("Moses Cycle," 531; "Portraits de donateurs," no. 3) reconstructed the name as Βοουέρι, while older Sinai publications, probably rightly, transcribed the name as Κουερῖνος; see K. Amantos, Σιναϊτικὰ μνημεῖα ἀνέκδοτα, suppl. 1 to Ἑλληνικά (Athens, 1928), 53; H. L. Rabino, *Le monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Mont Sinai* (Cairo, 1938), 62, 86 no. 49, 112 no. 165. The full inscription as transcribed by Amantos reads: ὁ εὐτελ(ὴς) (μον)αχ(ὸς) Νε(ῑλ)ο(ς) Κουερ(ῖνος;) ἀρχιεπίσκοπος καὶ καθη(γού)μενος τοῦ ἁγ(ίου) ὄρους Σινᾶ (p. 53). Amantos also cites an inscription on a 17th-century icon on Sinai, bearing the name of Nicholas Κουρίνος (p. 52; see also Rabino, *Monastère*, 61). On Venetian gentlemen on Crete by the name of Querini, see G. Fedalto, *La chiesa latina in oriente*, 2d ed. (Verona, 1981), 1:382, 386 (Paolo Querini, duke of Crete in 1217), 391 (Giovanni Querini, Latin archbishop of Candia in 1248). See also S. Xanthoudidou, "Κρητικὰ συμβόλαια ἐκ τῆς Ἑνετοκρατίας," Χριστιανικὴ Κρήτη: *Creta christiana* 1 (1912): 35. I owe this reference to the kindness of Mary Aspra, and I take this opportunity to thank her for her generous advice on the reading of the inscrip-tion. The Latin name is indeed puzzling for an icon done apparently early in the Latin domination, and one wonders whether it could conceivably be connected with the struggles over jurisdiction, which the Greek archbishop of Sinai, Symeon, managed to resolve by 1217 with the assistance of the pope and authorities in Venice (see below, p. 163). But see, most recently, S. McKee, "Women under Venetian Colonial Rule in the Early Renaissance: Observations on Their Economic Activities," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51 (1998): 34–67, esp. 39–40, on the difficulties of ascertaining ethnic origin from proper names. I wish to thank David Jacoby for alerting me to this article, and for other helpful and relevant information.

[40] On this icon, see note 48 below.

[41] Ševčenko, "Vita Icons."

the frame; in many cases, the frame is in fact a later gift to an older panel.[42] The frame both adorns and comments upon the portrait; the possibilities inherent in such a dialogue become highly developed in the Komnenian period.[43] The study of the *vita* icons suggests the same distinction, with the *vita* being something added to the central image. It is possible to read the *vita* icon of St. George in Athens, which comes originally from Kastoria (Fig. 21), in this way. The central panel, no ordinary image of George but a wooden relief sculpture that contrasts strongly with the rest of the icon, which is painted, may well refer to a specific wooden image of St. George, such as the extraordinary xoanon, nearly 3 m tall, in the Omorphecclesia church in the hills above Kastoria (Fig. 22).[44] I have suggested elsewhere that the central panel was meant to evoke such a wooden figure, and that the donor, the lady from Kastoria in *proskynesis* at the lower left, is therefore appealing to the saint through a very specific, identifiable image, which she has had copied and then adorned by surrounding it with a *vita* of the saint.[45]

Even when the central panel seems a straightforward portrait of a saint, one should consider the possibility that it is meant to be reproducing a known image. The central figure of Moses on the Sinai *vita* icon (Fig. 19) quite closely resembles another icon on Sinai—that of Moses receiving the Law, painted by the artist Stephen on one of his two large panels, which were designed as a pair and are now hanging on the north and south walls of the basilica (Fig. 23).[46] Though the two Moses icons differ in style, the rare composition, which combines the reception of the Law with the image of the Burning Bush and the prominent sandals, is shared by both; but on one a *vita* cycle has been added. However, once the *vita* border is subtracted, the panels are nearly identical in size.[47] Again, one has the impression that the artist of the *vita* panel is deliberately reproducing a known original, to which he has added a framing *vita*.

An icon from Cyprus, done later in the thirteenth century, makes this process even clearer. The famous icon of St. Nicholas from Kakopetria has intrigued scholars because of its large size—at over 2 m tall, it is the largest Byzantine *vita* icon in existence, and

[42]Examples can be found in A. Grabar, *Les revêtements en or et en argent des icônes byzantines du moyen âge* (Venice, 1975).

[43]See A. W. Carr, "The Presentation of an Icon on Sinai," Δελτ.Χριστ.Άρχ.Ἑτ., ser. 4, 17 (1993–94): 239–48.

[44]On the Athens icon, see note 3 above; on the xoanon, see G. Soteriou, "La sculpture sur bois dans l'art byzantin," in *Mélanges Charles Diehl* (Paris, 1930), 2:178–80; on the Omorphecclesia church, see S. Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* (Vienna, 1992), 48–49, with earlier bibliography. The church was probably built in the 11th century; it also bears an inscription on the west wall of the exonarthex that gives a date between 1296 and 1317.

[45]Ševčenko, "Donors and Holy Figures," 158–60.

[46]On the icons of Moses and Elijah by Stephen, see Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 109–10, 164, fig. 34 (Elijah); Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, pl. 75; Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," fig. 31. The icon of Elijah (and perhaps the Moses one as well?) exhibits the same pattern of wavy red and blue-black lines on its reverse as the *vita* icons mentioned earlier (see note 28 above).

[47]The dimensions of the Moses *vita* icon are 142 × 90 cm; without the *vita* (11 cm on each side), the height of the icon would be 120, and its width 68 cm. The icons by Stephen measure 129 × 69 cm. One wonders what were the images of Moses described as located on either side of the golden Burning Bush by Magister Thietmar, *Peregrinatio*, XVIII, ed. Laurent, *Peregrinatores*, 42: "Rubus quidam sublatus est et inter Christianos pro reliquiis distractus, ad instar autem illius rubi factus est aureus rubus ex laminis aureis, et ymago Domini aurea super rubum, et ymago Moysi aurea stans ad dexteram rubi, discalcians se. Stat et alia ymago Moysi aurea in sinistra parte rubi tamquam discalciata et nudis pedibus. Ubi Dominus dedit ei legationem ad Pharaonem, regem Egypti, de educendo populo suo." Does he mean the Justinianic mosaics or more recent panels? If the latter, the pair of icons must consciously echo the arch mosaics.

one of the largest icons anywhere—and because of its combination of a Byzantine *vita* cycle and Latin donors (Fig. 20).[48] The central figure is inscribed as St. Nicholas ὁ τῆς Στέγις, that is, Nicholas "of the roof." The icon, in fact, used to be in the church of St. Nicholas tes Steges, an eleventh-century foundation known by this name because of its particular double roof.[49] The icon, now transferred to Nicosia, was formerly affixed to a wall of the narthex of this church.

Of relevance here is a fresco uncovered only quite recently, an image of St. Nicholas painted on the walled-up entrance to the diakonikon, and serving in this position as the end panel of the iconostasis (Fig. 24).[50] The twelfth-century fresco is also very large, over life-size, in fact. It must certainly have been the model for the icon, and the unusually large size of the icon may have been prompted by a desire to reproduce the fresco exactly, to scale. Here, then, is a sure case of a *vita* icon reproducing as its central panel what is essentially the title-saint icon of a particular church. As the inscription makes clear, the central panel of this icon is not a general image of Nicholas, but a very particular one, namely, the fresco image in the church of Nicholas tes Steges. It is through this *local* image of the saint, adorned by the donors with a *vita,* that the kneeling figures hope to reach St. Nicholas and achieve salvation.

This brief survey of the earliest *vita* icons has shown that the form appears rather suddenly in the early thirteenth century, and is used at first for a rather narrow selection of saints, many of them having connections with Sinai, where, in fact, the majority of surviving examples are to be found. The icons are large-scale and surely intended for public display, but they do not apparently belong in the iconostasis or have a precise liturgical function. The donors are often foreigners. The form chosen fits nicely with the taste of the late twelfth century and indicates that the *vita* cycles were being viewed as a form of donation to a particular image of the saint.[51]

Keeping in mind the admittedly rather scanty concrete evidence, I shall now focus on the possible origin and function of these icons, and suggest that the main impetus for

[48] Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium,* no. 263; Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas,* no. 14. See also Papageor-ghiou, *Icons of Cyprus,* 46–49, pl. 32a, b; Weitzmann, "Maniera Greca," 155, fig. 16; D. Mouriki, "The Wall Paintings of the Church of the Panagia at Moutoullas, Cyprus," in *Byzanz und der Westen,* ed. Hutter (as in note 12 above), 171–213, esp. 210 and fig. 32; and, especially, J. Folda, "Crusader Art in the Kingdom of Cyprus, 1275–1291: Reflections on the State of the Question," in *Cyprus and the Crusades,* ed. N. Coureas and J. Riley-Smith (Nicosia, 1995), 209–37, esp. 216–21 and fig. 6.

[49] On the church, see A. Stylianou and J. Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus* (London, 1985), 53–75, figs. 18–30.

[50] Ibid., 62, 65, fig. 25.

[51] To this category should be assigned the companion icon to that of St. Nicholas of Steges, namely, the panel by the same artist showing the Virgin surrounded by depictions of miracles performed not so much by the Virgin Mary herself as by the particular image reproduced in the central panel; Papageorghiou, *Icons of Cyprus,* 46–49, fig. 31; Sophocleous, *Icons of Cyprus,* no. 25; Folda, "Reflections," 216–21; D. Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting in Cyprus," *The Griffon,* n.s., 1–2 (1985–86): 38–47; A. W. Carr and L. Morrocco, *A Byzantine Masterpiece Recovered: The Thirteenth-Century Murals of Lysi, Cyprus* (Austin, Tex., 1991), 106. Compare also Figure 2 above: in the icon of St. George on Sinai, the central figure is clad in military costume, while in the scenes around the edge he wears court dress (except when riding against the dragon); Soteriou and Soteriou, Εἰκόνες, pls. 167, 169. One has the impression that the central image could be a copy of a known icon of St. George, which has been then surrounded by scenes of his life. And the icon of the Anargyroi in the Kastoria museum should be compared with the fresco icon on a pier in the church of the

the development of the *vita* icon should be sought in the Eastern Mediterranean, perhaps at Sinai itself, and be seen as a response to the particular multilingual, multiethnic environment of the region, as well as to the perceived role of Sinai in the fragmented political world of the Eastern Mediterranean in the first half of the thirteenth century. I would like to characterize these icons as a new form of *vita* expressly designed to be understood by the diverse groups that constituted this society.

First of all, it is worth remembering that the *vita* icon first appeared at the end of the twelfth century, which was a period of decline in both the composition and the widespread circulation of written saints' *vitae*.[52] There was no liturgical need for more *vitae*, since few slots for readings were left vacant: Metaphrastes had seen to that, by providing a *vita* to be read at orthros on many days of the year.[53] The writing of saints' *vitae* was becoming a more personal affair, motivated by the desire to honor a saint through one's own writings, as well as the wish to provide a favored sanctuary with a special occasional piece for its own use.

By contrast to this shrinking of expectation and audience of the literary production, the *vita* icon offered a fresh and versatile medium for hagiography, appropriate to the mixed society of the thirteenth-century Levant. The secret of the success of the *vita* icon genre becomes apparent when one looks at two cycles of St. Nicholas, the early-thirteenth-century Sinai one and the late-thirteenth-century Kakopetria icon (Figs. 1, 20).

The Sinai icon devotes many scenes to the cycle, beginning with the birth and ending with the death of the saint; in between, it weaves stories from several different sources, maintaining a careful balance between the biographical *topoi* and the ethical and the miraculous themes, and exhibiting a signal reluctance, noted earlier, to attach the veneration of the saint to relics in any specific sanctuary.[54] The result is a *vita* that is balanced, broad, and informative, as well as independent of local concerns.

The Kakopetria cycle takes things a bit further. The *vita* here presents all the tradi-

---

Anargyroi at Kastoria; S. Pelekanidis and M. Chatzidakis, *Kastoria* (Athens, 1985), 32, fig. 10. There are many later examples of icons with scenes that surround a specific miraculous image of the Virgin relating the story of that very image: see, for example, an icon of the Virgin of Vladimir from the Stroganoff school, or icons of the Virgin Portaitissa. See E. Bakalova, "Zwei Ikonen der Muttergottes Portaitissa (von Iviron) in Bulgarien," Δελτ.Χριστ.Ἀρχ.Ἑτ., ser. 4, 17 (1993–94): 347–58.

[52] See P. Magdalino, "The Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century," in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. S. Hackel (London, 1981), 51–66. On the revival of hagiography in the Palaiologan period, see A.-M. Talbot, "Old Wine in New Bottles: The Rewriting of Saints' Lives in the Palaeologan Period," in *The Twilight of Byzantium*, ed. S. Ćurčić and D. Mouriki (Princeton, N.J., 1991), 15–26.

[53] On the readings from Symeon Metaphrastes' *vitae* of the saints, see A. Ehrhard, *Überlieferung und Bestand der hagiographischen und homiletischen Literatur der griechischen Kirche*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1937–40), 2:314–17; Ševčenko, *Metaphrastian Menologion*, 3–6. The readings originally took place at monastic orthros, but were eventually transferred to the refectory, which meant that their audience would have been even more restricted. Just when this change took place is unclear, but refectory readings of supplementary, non-Metaphrastian texts are documented in 12th-century Sicily; see M. Arranz, *Le typicon du monastère du Saint-Sauveur à Messine* (Rome, 1969), 67 (a text of the miracles of St. Nicholas was read aloud in the refectory on December 6).

[54] Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, no. 3. The scenes are the following: the birth of Nicholas; the schooling of Nicholas; Nicholas is consecrated priest, then bishop; Nicholas celebrates mass; Nicholas fells the cypress of Plakoma; Nicholas saves mariners; Nicholas saves three men from execution; the three generals in prison; Nicholas appears to Constantine, then to Ablabius; the three generals come before Constantine the Great; the three generals thank Nicholas; the death of Nicholas; Nicholas rescues Basil from the Saracens.

tional Byzantine episodes, slightly altered, to be sure, in the retelling. But it also introduces a posthumous miracle known only from Latin sources, that of the three salted boys (Fig. 25).[55] It is capable of combining elements, then, not only from different written sources but also from two independent literary traditions, the Greek and the Latin. The result is a hybrid *vita* that would probably never have come into existence in written form, and would have had no place in the liturgy of either culture. Here it adorns and celebrates a specific Nicholas image located in a specific place, but its eclectic language serves to glorify a saint who can be venerated by all regardless of language, race, or creed.

The final two scenes on the Kakopetria icon show the death of the saint and then his tomb as TÁ]ΦΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΒΡΗΟΝ ΤΟ ΜΙΡΟΝ (*sic*), that is, "pouring forth its oil," with pilgrims shown marveling at the tomb (Fig. 26). The need to identify a final resting place, or source of healing, is arguably more Western in spirit: we saw the same thing in the comparison of the Byzantine and the Western St. Catherine panels. What is interesting here, though, is that the caption to the first scene identifies it as Κ]ΗΜΗΣΙΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ ΕΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΙΡΗΣ or "the death of the saint *at Myra*" (Fig. 27; italics mine). Which sanctuary, then, are the pilgrims visiting—Bari, where the relics had been taken in 1087, or Myra, which apparently never admitted the loss? The donors are Latin, which would suggest a preference for the Bari sanctuary; yet, despite its generic character, the architecture of the two sites does seem to be deliberately presented as identical and one is clearly identified as Myra. This ambiguity, intended or not, is in perfect accord with the mixed character of this work; the *vita* cycle here interweaves the two literary traditions, and perhaps even the two grave sites, thereby giving Nicholas a universal validity.

Where could this genre of icon have originated? It does not seem to have been Constantinopolitan in origin, although we lack any icons from the capital from just this period, the first half of the thirteenth century.[56] But the evidence we do have suggests that the form first became popular in the Eastern Mediterranean, and was possibly promoted by Sinai itself.

Sinai in the early thirteenth century was under the leadership of a very active abbot, the archbishop Symeon.[57] The monastery had been given substantial holdings on Crete

---

[55] Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, no. 14. The scenes represented are: the birth of Nicholas; the schooling of Nicholas; Nicholas is consecrated priest, then bishop; the story of the three maidens; Nicholas fells the cypress of Plakoma; Nicholas saves mariners; Nicholas saves three men from execution; the three generals in prison; Nicholas appears to Constantine, then to Ablabius; the three generals come before Constantine the Great; the three generals thank Nicholas; the death of Nicholas; the tomb of Nicholas; Nicholas rescues Basil from the Saracens; Nicholas resurrects three murdered schoolboys. On the latter episode, which first appears in Latin texts of the 12th century, see Meisen, *Nikolauskult*, 289–306; C. W. Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari and Manhattan* (Chicago, 1978), 128–40; Ševčenko, *Life of Saint Nicholas*, 153.

[56] The fresco cycle of St. Francis from the Kalenderhane church in Constantinople (ca. 1250, now in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum) uses the *vita* panel format of a large central figure flanked by ten small-scale scenes. I wish to thank Cecil Lee Striker warmly for showing me, in advance of publication, the chapter on these frescoes; now see C. L. Striker and Y. D. Kuban, *Kalenderhane in Istanbul: The Buildings, Their History, Architecture, and Decoration. Final Reports on the Archaeological Exploration and Restoration at Kalenderhane* (Mainz, 1997), 128–42. The choice of format should be studied within the context of the function of the *vita* icon itself.

[57] On the history of Sinai, see J. Kamil, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai: History and Guide* (Cairo, 1991); A. Paliouras, *The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai* (Athens-Cairo, 1985); Eckenstein, *Sinai;*

by the archbishop of Crete in 1203, which the new Latin archbishop was threatening to expropriate after the Venetian acquisition of the island shortly thereafter in 1204. Symeon traveled to Venice and Rome in 1211, where he not only won reparations from the Doge Pietro Ziani for the harm done to the Sinai monks on Crete, but also succeeded in persuading Pope Honorius III to provide papal guarantees of protection for all Sinai properties throughout the Mediterranean.[58]

Symeon also undertook to rewrite a typikon for the monastery in 1214, and from this document one learns that an earthquake had struck the monastery on 1 May 1201, collapsing the fortress walls and the cells of the monks (a calamity which, incidentally, does not seem to have been noted in any architectural history of the monastery).[59] Symeon was most likely the abbot responsible for the reconstruction. Additionally, the monastery was emerging in this very period as an important center of icon production: its extraordinary activity there in the early thirteenth century has been chronicled in the researches of Weitzmann and Doula Mouriki.[60]

Sinai's properties lay in Jerusalem, Syria, Crete, Cyprus, and Constantinople,[61] and Sinai was housing an ever more diverse body of monks and visitors within its walls. Leaving aside the evidence provided by the numerous Georgian, Syriac, and Arabic manuscripts held in the library,[62] the inscriptions found scattered throughout the monastery,[63]

Rabino, *Monastère;* H. Skrobucha, *Sinai* (Olten-Lausanne, 1959); Amantos, Σιναϊτικὰ μνημεῖα, 1–118; idem, Σύντομος ἱστορία τῆς ἱερᾶς μονῆς τοῦ Σινᾶ, suppl. 3 to Ἑλληνικά (Thessalonike, 1953), 1–114. A list of the archbishops of Sinai in this period can be found in Rabino, *Monastère,* 83. There is some doubt whether the Symeon known to have been archbishop in 1258 is the same individual as the archbishop Symeon of 1203. At any rate, there is a puzzlingly rapid succession of abbots: there were six in the second quarter of the century, with three between 1223 and 1228 alone.

[58]On Symeon's Cretan difficulties, see Fedalto, *Chiesa latina,* 1:383–89; G. Hofmann, "Sinai und Rom," *OrChr* 9.3 (1924): 226, 243; idem, "Lettere pontificie edite et inedite intorno ai monasteri del Monte Sinai," *OCP* 17 (1951): 283–303. See also Mouriki, in *Sinai,* 384 nn. 6–9. Honorius's bull is dated 1217; he sent confirming letters to the bishop of Sinai in 1223, 1225, and 1226, as well as letters to various civil and Latin ecclesiastical authorities in Crete on behalf of the Sinai monks there, first in 1217, and again in 1224, 1225, and 1226. Several of Honorius's successors as pope in the course of the 13th and 14th centuries also signed documents confirming Sinai's rights to its properties on the island and elsewhere. After 1217, the documents are addressed simply to the bishop of Sinai, without giving a name; the early ones, however, are addressed to Symeon, whom Pietro Ziani, the Doge of Venice, addresses as archbishop in 1212, which apparently is the first use of the title. The codex Sinai gr. 2246 contains copies, in both Greek and Latin, of Cretan Venetian documents relevant to Sinai from 1212 to 1669. One Sinai manuscript contains a sermon in Arabic attributed to a Symeon, bishop of Sinai (Eckenstein, *Sinai,* 149).

[59]Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie,* 3:394–419, esp. 402–3, 415–16. The liturgy for the anniversary of the earthquake included prayer services in the desert outside the walls of the monastery. The manuscript containing the typikon, a redaction of the Typikon of St. Sabas, is Sinai gr. 1097; in this text the monastery is still dedicated to the Virgin, not yet to St. Catherine, but the larnax of Catherine has already been brought down from the mountain into the monastery (cf. Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie,* 409, 411).

[60]Weitzmann, "Icon Programs," esp. 112–16; idem, *The Icon* (1982), 201–7; Mouriki, "Thirteenth-Century Icon Painting," esp. 61–62.

[61]The properties are listed in the papal bull of 1217; see Hofmann, "Lettere," 284.

[62]According to Hofmann, there are on Sinai 2,289 Greek manuscripts, 580 Arabic ones, 276 Syriac, 98 Georgian, 40 Slavic, 6 Ethiopian, and 5 "Palestinian" ones; "Lettere," 296. The numbers will probably need to be revised upwards. See M. Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai* (Wiesbaden, 1970); G. Garitte, *Catalogue des manuscrits géorgiens littéraires du Mont Sinai* (Louvain, 1956).

[63]Rabino, *Monastère,* 101–13.

and the reports of pilgrims,[64] and looking only at the linguistic evidence provided by the icons, one sees inscriptions on the Sinai icons being written in two languages—Georgian and Greek already in the eleventh century (Menologion icons), and Arabic and Greek in the thirteenth (e.g., Fig. 23).[65] On one icon of Moses before the Burning Bush, the donor wears an Arab turban.[66] Weitzmann has posited the existence of a Latin Crusader icon workshop actually living and working in the monastery in the later thirteenth century.[67]

Buildings were erected within the monastery walls to accommodate these diverse groups: an older structure was turned into a mosque sometime in the eleventh or twelfth century, and in the same century a Gothic hall with pointed arches, of unclear function, was constructed.[68] A chapel dedicated to St. Catherine provided Latin services, according to Felix Fabri, a late-fifteenth-century pilgrim.[69] At any rate, these various groups had been encouraged to conduct services in their own languages for some time. The typikon of the monastery of St. Sabas outside Jerusalem—this being the rule followed at Sinai as well—states that the Georgians, Syrians, and Franks in that monastery are allowed to recite the hours and read the Gospels and Apostles in their own "dialect" and in their own chapels, although they are not to celebrate the liturgy on their own: for that they are all to congregate in the main church and celebrate with the brotherhood the holy mysteries.[70] And the abbot Symeon, in his typikon for Sinai, says that the Apocalypse of St. John may be read on Sundays, if the abbot so desires—possibly a concession to Latin interests.[71]

The saints whose *vita* icons I have discussed—John the Baptist, George, Marina (alias Margaret), Moses, Catherine, and Nicholas—were, of course, being venerated by all these various groups, with Moses, Catherine, and John the Baptist reportedly venerated even by the Muslims.[72] East and West divided or disputed the possession of the relics of some

[64] Magister Thietmar reported in 1217 that the monks consisted of Greeks and Syrians (*Peregrinatio*, XVIII, ed. Laurent, *Peregrinatores*, 41). Ludolph of Suchem wrote in 1350 that there were more than four hundred Greeks, Georgians, and Arabs associated with the monastery; *Ludolph von Suchem's Description of the Holy Land (Written in the Year A.D. 1350)*, trans. A. Stewart, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 12 (London, 1895), 85.

[65] Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 102–3, 384 nn. 10–12, where she lists icons on Sinai with non-Greek inscriptions.

[66] Evans and Wixom, *Glory of Byzantium*, no. 250; Mouriki, in *Sinai*, 110, pl. 36; and eadem, "Portraits de donateurs," no. 6.

[67] K. Weitzmann, "Thirteenth-Century Crusader Icons on Mount Sinai," *ArtB* 45 (1963): 179–203; idem, *Icon*, 202–7.

[68] For the mosque, see Fratris Felicis Fabri, *Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae: Arabiae et Egypti Peregrinationem*, ed. C. D. Hassler (Stuttgart, 1843–49), trans. A. Stewart, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society 10 (London, 1893), 4:614; Rabino, *Monastère*, 39–43. According to George Forsyth, the structure belongs to the 6th century and was the original monastery guest house; G. Forsyth and K. Weitzmann, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Church and Fortress of Justinian* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1968), 7, 8, pls. XVI, XVII. For the Gothic hall, see Rabino, *Monastère*, 54–57 (this structure eventually became the refectory of the monastery).

[69] Felix Fabri, who visited Sinai in 1484, describes the Latin chapel near the pilgrims' guest house in the monastery; Fabri, *Wanderings*, 4:547, 549, 599, 612, 624. A Franciscan Antonius de Fano could celebrate Mass in the basilica in 1425, a privilege no longer granted Latins in Fabri's time, which was sorely resented by him. But Fabri and his fellow pilgrims were allowed to recite their own prayers at all the holy spots; see, e.g., *Wanderings*, 607.

[70] Dmitrievskij, *Opisanie*, 1:222–23.

[71] Ibid., 3:401–2 (except in the Easter season).

[72] Ludolph of Suchem, who visited Sinai in 1341, describes how the Saracens joined the Latins in kneeling before the relics of St. Catherine; *Description*, 86. Magister Thietmar in 1217 found the Burning Bush vener-

of these saints, and new legends sprang up right and left. The relics of St. Catherine, all but a skull and a hand, were taken from Sinai itself to France in the eleventh century; the relics of St. Nicholas were claimed by Bari after the expedition of 1087, though Myra never did concede the loss.[73] A diverse community, sharing saints but having divergent literary traditions for their stories, would have been a fertile ground for the growth of a new form of hagiography.[74]

The immense icon production activity on Sinai in the early thirteenth century, including the almost serial-like production of the *vita* icons we have been studying, its diversity of population, and its fame as a pilgrimage site, as well as its wide connections through its properties all over the Mediterranean, do make Sinai one possible center for the promotion and dissemination of this new form of icon.[75] Perhaps the *vita* icon was not, after all, as had been thought, a form invented in one milieu, namely, the East, and borrowed by the other, that is, the West, but instead one designed from its inception to be a mode of transmission between cultures sharing the same saints but venerating them in different languages and liturgies. In the monastery of Sinai, saints' *vitae* continued to be translated from Greek into Arabic and into Georgian for the use of these various groups[76]—but it was the *vita* icon that could provide the one truly international language in which to tell the tale, namely, the language of art.

Philadelphia, Pa.

---

ated by Saracens and Christians alike, all of whom, regardless of rank, had to remove their shoes before entering the chapel; *Peregrinatio*, XVIII, ed. Laurent, *Peregrinatores*, 42. Another pilgrim, Frescobaldo (1384), claimed that the Saracens venerated the Virgin, John the Baptist, St. Catherine, and all the patriarchs of the Old Testament; cf. Eckenstein, *Sinai*, 163.

[73] Relics of St. Catherine were peddled at Rouen by a Sinai monk Symeon "the Five-Tongued," who died in Trèves (Trier) in 1035; see Amantos, Σύντομος ἱστορία, 29–31, 34. According to Eckenstein, *Sinai*, 139, there once existed an order of knights devoted to the protection of pilgrims traveling to visit St. Catherine's monastery at Sinai, although I am unable to verify this assertion. On St. Nicholas, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, 1:435–49; 2:514–26 (*Translatio Barim Graece*).

[74] See G. T. Dennis, "Schism, Union, and the Crusades"; D. M. Nicol, "The Crusades and the Unity of Christendom"; and A. W. Carr, "East, West, and Icons in Twelfth-Century Outremer," all in *The Meeting of Two Worlds: Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades*, ed. V. P. Goss (Kalamazoo, 1986), 181–87, 169–80, 347–59. See also the perceptive articles of A. W. Carr, "Byzantines and Italians on Cyprus: Images from Art," *DOP* 49 (1995): 339–57, and J. Folda, "Crusader Art in the Twelfth Century: Reflections on Christian Multiculturalism in the Levant," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (1995): 80–91, along with the works cited in his n. 9. S. Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," *DOP* 51 (1997): 11–31, deals with mixed communities in Palestinian monasteries, albeit in a much earlier period.

[75] Cyprus is an alternative, especially if the choice of saints on the *vita* icons will turn out not to be quite as tied to Sinai as I have claimed, but simply to reflect figures popular throughout the various cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean of this time.

[76] For Georgian translations of Greek saints' *vitae*, see Garitte, *Catalogue*, passim.